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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

WONG, JEFFREY KEITH

ART UNIT

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3714

MAIL DATE

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11/12/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/826,641	Applicant(s) OLIVE, SCOTT C.	
	Examiner Jeffrey K. Wong	Art Unit 3714	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 July 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 22-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 22-30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Application

1. This Office-Action acknowledges the Amendment filed on 7/11/2008 and is a response to said Amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 22-23, 26-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Thomas et al., US PUB 2004/0072607(Thomas)

Regarding Claim 22.

(New) A method for use with a gaming machine, the method comprising the steps of:
determining whether a game play button of a gaming machine has been actuated by a player(para 27. After activation of the paylines, the reels are set in motion by either pulling a lever 20 or depressing a push button);
initiating a play of a first game in response to determining that the game play button has been actuated(para 27), wherein the play of the first game comprises activating a plurality of pay lines at a cost to the player of only one wagering unit(para 26. Game

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play is initiated by inserting a number of coins or playing a number of credits, causing a CPU or game controller (not shown) to activate a number of pay lines corresponding to the number of coins or credits played);

determining whether the play of the first game results in a first game award outcome, wherein the first game award outcome comprises a first predefined combination of symbols associated with at least one of the pay line(para 29. Alternatively or additionally, the occurrence of "start-bonus" symbols and/or combination(s) may cause the processor to award coin(s) or credit(s) in the basic game);

in response to determining that the play of the first game resulted in the first game award outcome, informing the player that they are entitled to a play of a second game(Abstract. The bonus game is entered upon the occurrence of a special start-bonus game outcome in the basic mode); and

initiating a play of the second game in response to determining that said game play button has been actuated after said step of informing(para 50. In one embodiment, an animated "hand" pointer scrolls across the grid and window selection is accomplished by the player depressing a designated "select" button when the hand is pointing to a desired selection).

Regarding Claims 23, 27.

(New) The method as claimed in claim 22, further comprising the steps of: determining whether the play of the second game results in a second game award outcome, wherein the second game award outcome comprises a second predefined combination of

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symbols associated with at least one of the pay lines(para 4. The bonus game may comprise any type of game, either similar to or completely different from the basic game, which is entered upon the occurrence of a selected event or outcome of the basic game...The '840 application discloses an embodiment wherein the basic game is a reel-type slot machine and the bonus game is a simulated reel-type slot machine implemented on a dot-matrix display.);

allowing the player to select at least one of the second predefined combination of symbols(Abstract. In the bonus game, a player selects, one at a time, from an array of windows each associated with a bonus game outcome.); and

awarding the player only one of a plurality of prizes based on the at least one of the second predefined combination of symbols selected by the player(Abstract. Credits are awarded based upon which ones of the windows are selected.).

Regarding Claim 26.

(New) A gaming machine comprising a game play button(para 27); and an electronic controller and a memory storage device comprising software, the electronic controller and the memory storage device being arranged such that the electronic controller can process the software, wherein processing of the software by the electronic controller causes the electronic controller to(para 75. The memory unit stores control software, operational instructions and data associated with the video game. It is well known that processors are used for implementing software):

determine whether a game play button of the gaming machine has been actuated by a

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player(para 27);

initiate a play of a first game in response to determining that the game play button has been actuated, wherein the play of the first game comprises activating a plurality of pay lines at a cost to the player of only one wagering unit(para 26);

determine whether the play of the first game results in a first game award outcome, wherein the first game award outcome comprises a first predefined combination of symbols associated with at least one of the pay lines(para 29);

in response to determining that the play of the first game resulted in the first game award outcome, inform the player that they are entitled to a play of a second game(Abstract); and

initiate a play of the second game in response to determining that the game play button has been actuated after said electronic controller has informed the player of entitlement to play a second game(para 50).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 24-25 and 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomas et al., US PUB 2004/0072607(Thomas) as applied to claim 22 above, and further in view of Vancura, US PUB 2004/0219963(Vancura).

Regarding Claims 24, 28.

(New) Thomas failed to disclose comprising the step of causing the gaming machine to randomly select at least one of the second predefined combination of symbols if the player does not selected at least one of the second predefined combination of symbols with a period of time.

However, Vacura discloses of an invention related to casino games and, in particular, to improvements in the methods of playing timed bonus games on an underlying game (para 2) that can be applied to slot machines (para 5) because there exists a continual desire to limit the temporal length of the bonus game, so as to maximize the house advantage and to minimize moneymaking "down time" of the underlying casino gaming device(para 8) where if a bonus timer does expire, then there exists a design and method step choice of the player as to how the gaming is to proceed. In a preferred embodiment described above, the player is simply provided with a random response, and is awarded based on the accuracy of the randomly selected response(para 32). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the timer of Vancura's teachings with Thomas' bonus teachings as means of maximizing the house advantage and minimizing moneymaking "down time" of the underlying casino gaming device as taught by Vancura.

Regarding Claims 25, 29.

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(New) Thomas discloses further comprising the step of altering the at least one of the second predefined combination of symbols selected by the player or randomly selected by the gaming machine to reveal information about the one of the plurality of prizes to be awarded to the player (para 51. Upon selection of a selection element, the game controller causes the outcome associated with the selected selection element to be revealed on the display).

Regarding Claim 30.

(New) Thomas discloses wherein said game play button includes visual indicia informing the player that said game play button is for (1) actuation to initiate play of a base game and (2) actuation to initiate play of a feature game(para 77. The operator interface may comprise any combination of push buttons, joysticks, keypads, touch-screens and the like. The game controller executes control software in the memory according to the player inputs and communicates the resulting video game activity including, for example, text, animations and background graphics to the graphics display.)

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 22-30 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

7. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey K. Wong whose telephone number is (571)270-3003. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 8:30am-7:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hotaling can be reached on (571)272-4437. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JKW

/Scott E. Jones/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3714